

# A long-distance chat, NASA style

Co-ops talk to Expedition 7

By Sarah Milstead and Joanne Hale

**Ten** NASA cooperative education students from Johnson Space Center, Boeing and other local aerospace contractors had the unique opportunity to interact directly with Expedition 7 crew members Commander Yuri Malenchenko and NASA International Space Station Science Officer Ed Lu via a live downlink to JSC's Teague Auditorium on Aug. 6.

The crew appeared on a screen by way of satellite from the International Space Station and answered questions posed by the group. Seven student interns supporting space operations at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md., also participated in the out-of-this-world event.

"Speaking to the crew was a surreal experience," said Lindsay Croughn, Boeing intern. "It was very motivational – I can't wait to come back and work for the space industry."

Questions to the crew included the importance of the ISS, the effects of life in space on bones, brain chemistry and emotions, and the best ways for the next workforce generation to find jobs in the space industry.

"It's an unbelievable experience to be able to talk to someone in space in real time," said co-op Chris Thompson. "This was a great way to wrap up my summer with Boeing."

Following the hour-long chat with the ISS residents, students participated in a question-and-answer session with Expedition 7 lead Flight Director John McCullough and former NASA Chief Scientist Astronaut Shannon Lucid, Ph.D. McCullough gave a brief presentation on the makeup and future construction of the ISS, and Lucid presented an overview of the NASA organization.

"I thought the Expedition 7 co-op event was a great opportunity to reach out to the men and women who represent the future of NASA," McCullough said. "One of the great opportunities you get while you are a co-op or intern is to have diverse work experiences and see how NASA works. Speaking with the crew and hearing about our mission on the ISS first hand is truly a unique experience."

"I think that talking to the Expedition 7 crew live from orbit was a very inspiring event for the co-ops to be involved in," Lucid said. "Talking with the crew on ISS emphasized to the co-ops the importance of their endeavors at NASA."

McCullough said the bright future of NASA and the great opportunity that the event provided demonstrated the exceptional accomplishments that have taken place in the space program.

"NASA is a large family working together to achieve great things, and working with our international partners further enlarges this circle," McCullough said. "Sometimes the magnitude of our achievements is overshadowed or missed in our daily efforts, but when you step back and look at it, it is truly amazing. I think this event with the Expedition 7 crew helps remind us of the great things we are doing right now and will do in the future."



Co-op students take part in a live Q&A session with the Expedition 7 crew onboard the ISS.

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Astronaut Dr. Shannon Lucid and Deputy Director of Education Phil West address the audience during the ISS downlink.

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A co-op asks a question during the event, which was held in the Teague Auditorium at JSC.

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